



**McGregor W. Scott**  
United States Attorney  
Eastern District of California

*Sacramento*  
501 I. Street, Ste 10-100  
Sacramento CA 95814  
Tel (916) 554-2700  
TTY (916) 554-2855

**NEWS RELEASE**

*Fresno*  
2500 Tulare St., Suite 4401  
Fresno, CA 93721  
Tel (559) 497-4000  
TTY (559) 497-4500

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**July 19, 2007**

Contact: Rosemary Shaul (916) 554-2802

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae>

**MAN WHO POSED AS FORECLOSURE SPECIALIST SENTENCED  
TO OVER 5 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON AND ORDERED TO PAY BACK  
ALMOST A MILLION DOLLARS**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced that CHRISTOPHER CRAIG, 35, of Auburn, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Morrison C. England, Jr. to 60 months imprisonment followed by five years of supervised release and was ordered to pay \$975,000 in restitution. The defendant pleaded guilty to bank fraud on May 10, 2007.

This case was the product of an extensive investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Anne Pings, who prosecuted the case, the defendant approached homeowners who were on the verge of having their homes foreclosed on by their mortgage lenders. CRAIG promised to loan them money but instead created documents deeding away their residential properties to co-defendants who acted as "straws" and then applied for home equity loans from Washington Mutual Bank claiming falsely that they were the true owners of the properties and that there were no pending mortgages on the properties. In total, Washington Mutual disbursed \$1.2 million which, ended up in CRAIG's bank accounts; CRAIG paid back one of the loans before indictment, but still owed the bank \$975,000. The homes CRAIG used to perpetuate this scheme were located in Auburn, Lincoln, Stockton, Elk Grove, Sacramento and Manteca.

Co-defendants DONALD EDGECOMB, 35, of Trevor, Wisconsin, and JACOB ESTEVES, 35, of Auburn, previously pleaded guilty to lesser offenses and will be sentenced next month.

###